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Our Book Table.

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THE Essay on Manchu Literature, by Mr. P. G. von Möllendorff, is more complete in the list it gives of Manchu works than any which has appeared. The number of books in this catalogue is 249, and they have been compiled during about three centuries. The writing used by the Manchus is borrowed from Mongol and at one remove from Syriac. It comes originally, therefore, from Christian missionaries, who taught it in the cities of Chinese Turkestan, in the first instance to Turks who spoke the Wigur language. The Mongols took their syllabary from the Wigur. During the reign of Shunchi eighteen works in Manchu were published. In the reign of Kanghi there were forty-one more, and in that of Yungching seventeen. In the Kienlung period sixty-nine works were added, and the remaining eighty have appeared since.

It was during last century and this that bi-lingual works were published. Before the Manchus were expected to be able to read their own language without the assistance of Chinese. But by the middle of last century it became quite clear that Chinese was known thoroughly and Manchu only as a school exercise. Interlinear versions, therefore, were printed to facilitate the acquisition of Manchu by

the Peking bannermen. It was announced to them that they must learn the speech of their race if they expected office and honor.

As a part of Peking education it is a good thing for the pupil to acquire a language different from the Chinese, because it gives him a wider view of what language is. He learns to separate names from the things they represent and to distinguish between the different order in their arrangement which words may assume when spoken, according as the speaker is Chinese or Tartar. The effect, as a mental exercise, is unquestionably good, for there is nothing more delusive than the impression on the minds of those persons who have learned only one language that their way of saying things is the only natural and proper way.

In 1848 Saishang published a compendium of Mongolian. Many Manchus have duties in Mongolia, and such a book is useful for them. Besides there are many Mongols who wish to learn Manchu, and they also would find this book useful.

The number of books in Manchu literature would have been less but for the extension of the empire over Mongolia. Not only are there Manchu garrisons in all the provinces of China proper, but throughout Mongolia also. It becomes necessary, therefore, to provide for tri-glot education wherever these garrisons exist. This is the more

necessary, because the Mongol language is a living tongue and is not like Manchu, acquired at school. In some parts of Mongolia, Chinese emigrants learn to speak Mongol so exclusively that they partly forget their own tongue. This shows the importance of Mongol on account of the extent of territory over which it is spoken, a permanent monument of the conquests of Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century. The Mongols at that time left enduring traces of their conquests in the modern use of the speech of themselves and their great leader all over Mongolia. The present dynasty, while stimulating Manchu studies, has not quite neglected Mongol.

The same is true of Tibetan and Turkish. Something has been done by the government to encourage the study of these languages by the Manchu garrisons, but not much.

There is a special value in Mr. von Möllendorff's list, because it is so much more full than any preceding one.

Yet it is doubtful if some of the works printed in the book shops adjacent to the Sung-chu-sz and Yung-ho-kung in Peking, are not omitted, so that the list may be swelled probably beyond two hundred and fifty, and it would be well for these to be added on some future occasion. Some account of the Buddhist works, translated into Manchu, such as the Book of 42 Sections, which is mentioned incidentally, would be interesting.

The article on Chinese Currency and Measures is one of very great utility. We learn now what sort of silver ingots are used at Meng-tsu in region where Mr. A. G.

Happer is now acting as Commissioner. They are not round on their flat face, or oval, as we usually see them, but octagonal. The city Ching-yang, in Shensi, is the chief commercial centre of the Northwest. But it was sacked by the Mahomedan rebels, and the trade of this city was then transferred to San-yuen. Both places are near the provincial capital and distant from it only twenty or thirty miles. The King-yang scale is used in Kan-su province. The tael by this scale weighs 558.15 grains, while that of Shanghai is 560. According to what Messrs. G. Parker and C. F. Hogg tell us, drafts granted in Kansu and Shensi, to be drawn in Hankow, are written in this scale. At Hankow the tael is 554.7 grains.

At Seoul Mr. Halifax states that from 1,200 to 2,000 cash are paid for a dollar. Things must be different there to what they are at Shanghai, where 1,000 cash pay for a dollar. Copper is cheaper and silver much dearer. But the import and export of copper cash at Chinese ports is contraband, and it is only in certain circumstances that cash can be brought to China. Cash notes, of the value of 300, 400, 500 and 1,000 cash each, are much used in Nanking. They are well engraved and printed on strong paper in red and blue.

The particulars given by various residents in different parts of China are of great interest. The picul varies at Hsü-chou in Kiangsu, from 100 catties (taro and ground nuts) to 260 catties (wheat) and 280 catties rice. The intermediate values are: Peas 240 catties, beans 250 catties, maize 300 catties and

many others. The cause of increase is probably in the largeness of trade. Expansion of trade makes the seller willing to give more weight. If he sells little of an article, he gives the exact weight and no more.

So Dr. Barchet says that at Ningpo the peck increases in size in large shops, where business is done for ready cash, and decreases, where the credit system prevails.

It is then the ready money system of doing business that gives the buyer more rice for his store-room and more cloth to clothe his family. It is on the other hand the credit system of carrying on trade that checks the liberality of the seller and gives the purchaser the smallest quantity of the article he wishes that justice will allow.

The facts here collected are most valuable, the more so because they are contributed by many different persons.

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